

Milwaukee Veterans Administration Medical Center,  
Building 38 (Milwaukee Veterans Administration Medical  
Center, Duplex Quarters)  
5000 West National Avenue  
Milwaukee  
Milwaukee County  
Wisconsin

HABS No. WI-303-A

HABS  
WIS,  
40-MILWA,  
42-A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MILWAUKEE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION MEDICAL CENTER, BUILDING 38  
(Milwaukee Veterans Administration Medical Center, Duplex Quarters)

HABS No. WI-303-A

HABS  
WIS,  
40-MILWA,  
42-A-

LOCATION: Veterans Administration Medical Center  
5000 W. National Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI 53295

PRESENT OWNER: Veterans Administration Medical Center

PRESENT OCCUPANT: Vacant

PRESENT USE: Vacant - Demolition anticipated in 1986

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: Building 38 is a two story duplex with an attic and full basement. This residence as well as all the residences in the Historic District were for the Northwest Branch National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers indicative of a complete self-contained community. In addition, they are an example of the life style of the top staff at that time.

Military concept of staff housing was reflected in this quarters. The size of the quarters building, that of a multiple bedroom structure demonstrates a family size dwelling.

Accordingly, they are an example of residential rather than institutional construction.

The building had been used as a residence for its duration for government employees until November 17, 1977. It was originally the Treasurer's Quarters and Quartermaster's Quarters. It later became the Chief Clerk's Quarters. In 1952 it was occupied by the Assistant Manager.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of Erection: 1886

Architect: Unknown

Original and Subsequent Owners: Northwest Branch National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers - Original owners which became the Veterans Administration in 1930.

Builders, Contractors, Suppliers: Unknown

Original Plans & Construction: Original plans not available. Plans drawn 5/23/35 by Matzke.

Alterations & Additions: General maintenance and repair. Some remodeling is evident from years past.

Historical Narrative:

Building 38 was constructed in 1886 as a resident duplex for employees for the North-west Branch National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers and later the Veterans Administration. The building was used for a wide variety of tenants. Rent was collected in later years.

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: The building represents a Simplified Victorian style construction. The original windows were embraced by shutters. These were removed in later years. Screened-in porches were added in later years.
2. Condition of Fabric: Poor (to be demolished). Wood is deteriorating; the foundation is beginning to crumble.

3. Summary Description: Building 38, built in 1886, is a two story duplex with an attic and full basement. It is an asymmetrical wood frame house finished in white clapboard. The dwelling is topped with a Swedish gambrel asbestos roof, which runs lengthwise. The roof is penetrated by two interior double-chimneys and an end wall single chimney. Along the side of the gambrel roof, at the front of the building is a flush gable. Belonging to the left unit, it is located slightly to the left of center. Below the gable is a projecting one story screened entry porch with a very low hip roof. Inside the screens are round wood columns supporting the roof, and a white wood baluster. The front door, reached through this porch and centered beneath the gable, is wood. It has a large panel of frosted glass, surrounded by sidelights and a transom. At the gable, attic level, there is a double sash window that is peaked at the center, conforming to the shape of the gable.

On the right end, extending around the side, is a larger screened entry porch for the other unit. The front door is wood and glass. It has only a transom.

For the most part, the windows on the first floor are two over two double hung; the second floor ones are slightly shorter one over one double hung windows. On the first and second floor within and on either side of the flush gable, the windows are doubled up.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Foundation: Reinforced concrete.
2. Wall Construction: The exterior walls are wood frame with horizontal wood clapboard siding.
3. Structural Systems: Reinforced concrete foundation with wood joists floor structural support and 2 x 4 framing.
4. Porches, Stoops, etc.: Screened front entry porch with low hip roof on both sides. Rear entry porch on both units.
5. Openings, Doorways and Windows: Double hung windows throughout. Front doors contain a large panel of frosted glass, surrounded by sidelights and a transom. The rear doors are wood and glass.

6. Roof, Shape and Covering: The roof is a Swedish gambrel asbestos roof. It is in poor condition. A flush gable is at the front of the building.

C. Detailed Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans: The entrance lobbies on both sides of the duplex are a 7' - 0" wide x 28' - 0" long plastered wall area with staircase to the 2nd floor. There is a formal dining room and living room on the 1st floor for each duplex side. A fireplace with marble interior and trim is located in each living room. The kitchens contain standard painted pine cabinets with a staircase leading to the 2nd floor which was utilized as an alternate access to the 2nd floor. A rear entry porch with pantry leads off the kitchen area. The 2nd floor contains 4 bedrooms on each side with one bathroom. The attic floor contains one bedroom on each side with storage rooms. The basement contains mechanical, electrical and plumbing space. The building is heated with steam. The entire interior is plaster finish including the ceilings.
2. Stairways: The main stairways from the 1st floor to the 2nd floor are located in the entryway. They are a curved banister in pine stained walnut. The vertical routed supports are painted white. The stairs are pine stained walnut. The rear stairs at the kitchen are enclosed plastered staircases. The stairs to the attic and basement are also wood with plaster enclosure.
3. Flooring: All flooring is maple 1" x 3" tongue and grove flooring varnished and stained maple.
4. Wall and Ceiling Finish: All ceilings and walls are plastered. Ceiling heights vary from 8' - 0" to 11' - 3".
5. Doorways, Doors, Windows: All doors are pine and fir painted white. Windows are wood - double hung windows with 1" x 6" trim molding with routed edges.
6. Interior Trim: Ceiling molding is 1" x 3" pine painted white. Baseboards are routed 1" x 6" with 1" x 1/2" cover molding.
7. Hardware: Brass pin mortise locks throughout.
8. Mechanical and Electrical Equipment: The building used steam heat through radiators in each room below the windows. It contains electric lighting. The fixtures are not original.
9. Fireplaces: The fireplaces have marble interior and brick with decorative wood trim of that era.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS:

1. Orientation and General Setting: The building faces south and is situated on the east end of the 242 acre VA Medical Center. The area is wooded with primarily oak, elm and maple trees. Another historical quarters building (37) built in 1902, is located 50 feet from this building and both make up a part of the Historic District. The area is relatively flat contour and has remained unchanged.

SOURCES OF PROJECT INFORMATION

Architectural plans and actual field measurements. The historical record was obtained from the National Register of Historic Places Nomination form (Eligible on 1-9-80) which was developed by the Historic Preservation Officer, VA Central Office, Office of Construction. The recordation conforms with the standards of the Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Dept. of the Interior.

Bibliography

Architect and Engineer: Unknown

VA Title Files

National Register Nomination

Annual Reports of the Board of Managers - National Home Disabled Volunteer Soldiers  
(1866 - 1930)

Engineering Service, VA Medical Center, Milwaukee, WI - Documents

Proceedings of the Board of Managers (1866 - 1930)

Scrapbooks

Photofiles - Dated & Nondated

Case Histories - Dated & Nondated

Prepared by: Thomas A. Heydel  
Chief Engineer  
VA Medical Center  
Milwaukee, WI 53295  
July 30, 1986

